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ISTERHOOD LIFE

AND

WOMAN'S WORK



BF. OF GRAHAMSTOWN



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To
Miss Sigrid Wöhlin

Sisterhood Life and Woman's Work,

IN THE

MISSION-FIELD OF THE CHURCH.

Presented by
her friend & pastor
The Rev.

Walter E. Bentley
Pastor of St. Peter's
Bainbridge
N. J.

July 17-1895

U. S. A.

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**Sisterhood Life and Woman's
Work,**

IN THE

MISSION-FIELD OF THE CHURCH.

BY THE RIGHT REV.

ALLAN BECHER WEBB, D.D.,

BISHOP OF GRAHAMSTOWN.

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PREFACE.

IT does not seem to me that an apology for the Sisterhood form of life within the Church is so much needed, as a statement of the true theory and principles on which it is based.

For my own part, I have no doubt that abundant sanction may be found for this special form of the dedicated life, in those significant principles, the working of which may be reverently traced in our LORD's own Life on earth, and which are more explicitly declared in His recorded Sayings.

This life, as we have watched it unfolding and developing individual characters, has clearly exhibited the fruits of Evangelical

faith, and love towards the Person of the SAVIOUR ; and its manifestation and extension in our Anglican Communion, if only it be guided, as it may be, in a spirit of thorough and hearty loyalty to our Prayer-Book and Constitution, cannot but prove a blessing and strength to our Church, in the fulfilment of that Mission which has been entrusted to it as part of CHRIST's Holy Catholic Church.

ALLAN B. GRAHAMSTOWN.

August, 1883.

EDITOR'S POSTSCRIPT.

This Address on "Sisterhood Life," with the three Papers previously read on "Woman's Work," is issued in the present form by the Author's own desire and authority, at the request of many.

It is only fair to him, however, to state that he had not the opportunity of revising the proof-sheets himself, before entering on his new work as Bishop of Grahamstown.

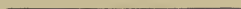
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I.

THE SUPPLY AND TRAINING OF WOMEN FOR MISSION WORK ABROAD.

Is there need, in the Mission-field, of women specially devoting themselves to the service of the Church? At least as much as in England; and relatively, much more.

We have not at our disposal, there, a supply of disengaged women who have leisure for Church work. Therefore, we need women who can give themselves—whether distinctly as “Sisters,” or pledged in some other way, at least in will and purpose, for a time—to the work of GOD and His Church, under the Bishop. Otherwise, women may be poured into our colonies, but they are sure to be absorbed by marriage.

Far from desiring to depreciate the good which they may do in this condition of life, I only wish that the immense influence which they will exercise in it, for good or evil, could be more deeply

impressed on them. But, as to any distinct and definite work for the Church which can be entrusted to them, they are lost to the Bishop, with few exceptions, upon their marriage. This must frequently be the case, at home : but it is far more so in colonial life, where domestic affairs, the care of children, &c., demand all the energies and health of most women in the upper classes ; obliged, as they are, to do almost everything themselves, which at home would ordinarily be done by servants. There is no time or strength left, to place at the disposal of the missionary.

What, then, are the wants to be supplied by such devout women ?

First, that of GOD's honour.—As “women professing godliness,” their mission will be to express the life of the Church,—which is the Bride of CHRIST, and His Mystical Body,—in its *heavenward* aspect ; to exercise, as it were, the power of the burnt-offering. So shall the King have pleasure in the beauty of His daughters, whose life is one of union with GOD, of power with GOD, and of witness for GOD, for His absolute right to all that men have and are. So shall there be a perpetual memorial going up, and the LORD shall be entreated for that land.

Secondly, that of Man's good.—As the “merciful

women,"—so our natives would call them, they extend the mission-work of CHRIST, in good works, such as education, personal influence, teaching, visiting, nursing, and ministering, even as the holy women also did in the old time. We know that home is the centre and fountain of social life; and woman is the centre of home. Such as the women are, such are the homes, and such the civilisation and the Christianity of society. To reach that centre, to purify it and consecrate it for the Kingdom of GOD, is woman's special work.

If so, is not woman forsaking her true place, by leaving home and country to work elsewhere? Yes,—if that "home" were not itself only a part of a larger circle; the family of man, and the family of GOD. But our LORD's own answer to the question, "Who is my neighbour?" forbids us to think of narrower limits to our duty. And therefore, to "do my duty in that state of life to which it shall please GOD to call me," may involve more than at first sight appears. It may involve helping to plant the "home" of GOD's Church, in foreign lands. And for this, women are needed. Therefore, women must go. There must be a supply.

This supply will depend upon three things. (a) Upon a high view of Mission-work, as the King's

own service, pervading the Church; based, not upon sentiment, but upon principle. (b) Upon GOD doing our Church and our people the honour to call a sufficient number of her daughters to this work; and upon their hearkening to His call. (c) Upon the dedication, or at least consent, of parents; for—unless perhaps in some very exceptional case—no child should go forth without a father's blessing, and a mother's loving, albeit tearful, prayers. We know that it is easier to give up ourselves to any trial or suffering, than to give up another whom we love.

The first of these conditions can be promoted by informing the mind of the Church at large; and the others, by prayer to the LORD, Who holds all hearts in His hands; Who gives the word, and "the women that tell the tidings are a great host." The hearty acceptance of the truth of the rights of GOD and the glory of His Kingdom will make a parent become as Hannah, who "lent unto the LORD" the child which she had received from Him, and who, in not withholding, was doubly blessed.

What principles are to guide Christian women, in offering themselves for Mission-work abroad?

Foundation truths must be firmly laid; not only as to the salvation of their own souls,—which, of

course, must be set free from the burden of sin and from the fear of death, before healthy work is possible,—but also as to the claims of GOD and of our neighbour.

(a) *The claims of GOD.*—It must be a matter of course, a realised and acknowledged fact, that GOD has an absolute right, as our Creator and our Redeemer, to dispose of us, body, soul, and spirit, as He chooses. We must face the fact that we are not our own. The will, as well as the understanding, must embrace it. The affections must say, “Amen” to it; so that the service may be no servitude, but the offering of a loving and intelligent child.

(b) *The claims of man.*—We must recognise our relationship to others, in GOD, as our Creator and our Saviour. He created all. He died for all. Man is one family. CHRIST died, “not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of GOD that were scattered abroad.” Therefore, as in an earthly family the sound must care for the sick, even at the risk of their own ease, health, and convenience,—as the best and most useful at home, must be sent forth, and go willingly, to the absent sick member,—so it is also in the Family of GOD. We must act on the truth of

our brotherhood. One of us must be sent by the others, with consent of all, to the one who needs most love.

This being understood, the only question is this : —and it is the question asked by the LORD GOD Himself : “ *Whom* shall I send ? ” — “ *Who* shall go ? ” *Christ lead us the way!*

To clear the way, ask first—Who shall *not* go ?

(a) Clearly, those who are useless at home ; *e.g.*, those who, through a discontented, unloving spirit, “ do not get on at home.” They are little likely to be useful, abroad ! “ If ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil ? ” (b) Those whose home duties are unmistakeably fixed by GOD’S Providence ;—*e.g.* a wife—a mother—the only daughter of aged parents, &c. (c) Those who forget that we can be nowhere on earth quite at home or perfectly happy ; or who suppose that there will be a conscious blessedness or perpetual excitement in Mission-life, to correct the monotony of existence. (d) Or those, if any such there be, who would magnify themselves rather than GOD, by doing great things ; those who seek for importance,—to be made much of, where much may depend upon them.

Yet I would not dismiss secondary motives, if not

sinful. They may lead up to the perfect Will of GOD. Nor would I—GOD forbid!—discourage any who have but the “one talent” to offer, as to position in life, education, natural abilities; the individual offerer and her offering are accepted, and GOD may choose to make His power specially visible, through her lack of power; but we do not give our best, in this case, as a Church.

Who then *shall* go? (a) *Those who will be missed at home*; women who have honestly tried to do their duty in that state of life to which it has hitherto pleased GOD to call them; women of practical good sense, as well as devotion; aye, and women, too, who might have this world,—wealth, and honour, and all the culture and the delights of this age; who would have to leave houses and lands, and brethren and sisters, for CHRIST’s sake and the Gospel’s. (b) *Those who have a vocation* for such a life. Need I say that there is such a thing as a “vocation” for individuals, as well as for the Church collectively? There are good works prepared for each of us to walk in. We are sent into the world for a definite purpose in the Kingdom of GOD.

“But how shall I find out,” it is asked, “if I have a vocation?”

1. Surrender the will absolutely to GOD, afresh ; and be ready to accept the issue ; crushing, in the Name of JESUS, all cowardly desire for convenient ignorance as to your possibilities of usefulness. Place yourself at the disposal of the great King.

2. Meditate on such passages as Isaiah vi. Take trouble to find out GOD's Mind, as to Missions,—*His* point of view, in the light of the Word of GOD. Alive and attentive, be ready to catch the answer, through even the smallest and stillest voice, to your appeal : "Speak, LORD, for Thy servant heareth."

3. In the same attitude of listening and of expectation, silently watch GOD's Providence. Notice especially any side which He seems to "hedge up," saying, Thou shalt *not* walk thitherward.

4. When your own fixedness of will has been sufficiently tested, by a time of silent waiting and seeking guidance of GOD only, then consult whatever guide He may have provided for you. Tell everything ; the balance of duties ; your defects ; your points of conscious power ; your state of health, in body and in nerves.

5. If advised to regard yourself as called to the work, give special time to prayer, that your parents,

or others whom you are bound to consider and consult, may love God better than they love you, and give you up to Him, if He asks it of them.

6. Then wait the issue, as silently as possible. Do not "break through." Respect GOD's own ordained bounds, in aspiring to a life of closer union with Him through self-sacrifice. And then? "The meek shall He guide in judgment."

The vocation being clear, and the Providence clear, the next step is actual *preparation* for the new duty.

In some ways, all foreign Mission-work demands the same qualities;—personal devotion to GOD being taken for granted.

1. All such work demands fair health, unshattered nerves, and that general equableness of spirits which so largely depends upon the physical state. A morbid mind or conscience is unfit for such work as this.

2. It cannot be too much impressed upon us, that the education and mental discipline which help most to build up the typical character of Woman are also the best for those called to any unusual work. For in whatever measure a woman becomes unwomanly, so far exactly is her usefulness as well

as her charm impaired. She can lose no grace naturally belonging to her, without losing at the same time power, influence, and capacity for the work for which she was formed. We all know what that work was :—to be a “help-meet” for Man. I say this of the unmarried, as well as of the married ; and no training can be good, in which this her calling, as “the fulness and mysterious complement” of Man’s nature, is not kept in view.

But in this her supplementary character, carefully directed, there need not be feebleness ; on the contrary, there should be fortitude. In the inspired picture of “the virtuous woman,” the quality which is made most prominent is strength. “She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms ; strength and honour are her clothing.” How far this ideal of the valiant woman, which the wise man has drawn, is from any approach to what is commonly called a “strong-minded woman,” will be seen by studying the details. And, indeed, I could desire no better training for a Mission-worker, than one which would enable her to carry out the details and follow the example of “the virtuous woman.” For, under the simpler and harder conditions of life which exist in far colonies, she must, indeed, be like the “merchant’s ships bringing her

food from afar ; rising while it is yet night, and giving meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens ; looking well to the ways of her household, and eating not the bread of idleness." Almost all the details in which this womanly strength is set forth are exactly those in which skill would be found most useful, in a Mission.

There is, first, the cunning and industrious hand. Perhaps only a woman can understand the education of the needle, and the real moral discipline involved in learning to use it skilfully : for practical Mission purposes, what an excellent training is provided, in learning to do "plain work" exquisitely well ! It gives even a mechanical education to the fingers, making them apt tools for all other work, such as is needed in cooking, nursing the sick, &c. "She maketh fair linen, and selleth it." No one can properly overlook that which he is incapable of doing well himself, if necessary ; though it is also true that many do that well, which they have not the power of making others do for them. It may be almost impossible to supply this power by education, where it is naturally lacking ; but it is a quality most necessary for women employed in Mission-work, and one which ought to be carefully trained and disciplined. We all know that it is

far easier and less troublesome to do a thing one's self, than to multiply power by getting many others to do the same thing well. Still, it is exactly this administrative faculty which is most valuable, in the lands where there are many untrained hands, and few that are trained.

3. All work in the Mission-field abroad needs some practical knowledge of common things; and, what is still more important than any one branch of practical knowledge, a readiness to observe and to learn and to do anything whatever that may have to be done, in the often unexpected contingencies of work abroad. To quote the Scotch proverb,—“*Can do* is easily carried about.”

4. But, at the same time, it is well that some distinct branch of work should be mastered; the choice being determined, to some extent, by the place in view. For India, where native servants are abundant, it is specially desirable that ladies working in the Zenanas should be clever in fancy work, and have a talent for music, &c. For South Africa, where the climate is much better, but the lack of good servants proverbial, a lady must be prepared to do everything for herself, and a good deal for the household.

One of the great hindrances to a really missionary spirit among Colonists in that part of the world, is the almost absorbing claim of household duties. Mind and soul alike are in danger of paralysis, through the undue and yet unavoidable proportion of care for outward things. Thus, the whole standard of mental and spiritual attainments is lowered. There is no appetite for mental food, or for spiritual ventures.

To meet this lowered condition of intellectual and moral life, Christian women—the more highly cultivated and refined, the better—must learn to understand that life, and to share it, so far as its lawful and necessary claims are concerned. They must share it; not so as to sink to the level of its unspiritual materialism, but in order to raise it and glorify it. They are to manifest,—after the example of the Virgin, blessed among women, to whom the Angel of GOD was sent at uncouth Nazareth,—the compatibility of rude household work with the spirit of recollection and adoration. They are to carry on the Mission of the Eternal SON, Who took part in flesh and blood, that we might become partakers of the Divine Nature. For others' sakes as well as their own, they must be able to turn their hand to anything. And, of course, the more they learn

in England, the more serviceable will they be yonder.

5. Some may be so conscious of some special gift of God, that they may find in this their land-mark. They have, *e.g.*, always felt most at home with the sick, or with children: and they judge rightly that this is their own "prepared" path, whether or not they see as yet whither it may tend. Music will be of use, everywhere; and so will Drawing, so far as my experience goes.

If the matter is determined, communication should be held, as soon as possible, with the Bishop for whose Diocese they are desirous of offering themselves; or with his Commissary.

In most cases,—not in all,—I should myself recommend residence for a time in some Community; in order that, among other reasons, the adaptability for living and working with other fellow-workers may be tested.

In all cases, I should urge attention to a rule of life, and especially a rule of meditation and devotion, so necessary where the outer life will be very distracting.

I should earnestly recommend some intellectual

training in systematical theology and Church history, in order to meet inquiries.

I should require the assurance of thorough, hearty, intelligent loyalty to the Anglican Church, to guard against restlessness.

I should warn any applicant of the temptations likely to arise from the withdrawal of much sustaining power in the way of religious activity and excitement, around us here; and I should warn her against a craving for much demonstrative sympathy.

I should prepare her for the necessity of retaining a high standard and aim, and a noble ideal of what Mission-work and Communities of Mission-workers should be; but, at the same time, of being at peace in the midst of much actual imperfection many petty, prosaic, common-place, and harassing trials.

The virtues that I should bid her cultivate would be hope, patience, and endurance; as well as, of course, unwearying love and sweetness of temper.

But—to end as we began—for one work or another, *women are needed*. They have their own place and work, in CHRIST's Church militant here

on earth ; a work which the Clergy can no more do, than women can do the work of the Clergy. In the "one Body," "all members have not the same office ;" nevertheless, even those members which seem to be the most feeble are "necessary."

But, in her feebleness, Love shall be the secret of Woman's strength :—

"The citadel,
Of courage and heroic fortitude,
Which in the centre of a woman's heart,
Is stablished, whatsoever outwardly
Of doubt or womanly weak fear prevail.'

If only, with a true heart, each one will listen to the call of GOD Almighty, "Whom shall I send?" it will be from those whom He chooses that the answer shall come—"Send me!"

II.

THE WORK OF WOMEN AT HOME, FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

“LET me write the ballads of a nation, and whoever will may make the laws!”

May we not say that it is the women who inspire the ballads, while the men make the laws?

The reign of Love is mightier than the reign of Law. Law touches the actions only; Love touches the springs of action. “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.”¹ Touch the heart of England, and the life-blood will flow forth through every artery, and back again through every vein. And it is the women of England who influence the heart of England; if silently, so much the more surely.

Our thoughts on the “Supply and Training of Women for Mission-work abroad,” have already

¹ Prov. xxiii. 7; iv. 23.

forestalled most of what might here be said, as to that part of Woman's Work.

Those thoughts may be roughly summed up in the following words. For the development of true life,—of Church life,—Home life,—women are needed everywhere; women who have realised the ideal of that life. If needed everywhere, then abroad as well as at home. And if women of the right sort, with leisure for work, are not to be found on the spot, then they must be sent forth from the mother-land. Some must go.

And who? Not the *useless* members of Home and Church. Not those who have a distinct home-duty that none other can do for them; *e.g.* a wife or mother. But, *those who would be missed*, wherever they have lived; and *those whom God has called*, by His special inward vocation, and by His co-operating Providence: giving them "a sound mind in a sound body," and circumstances that leave them free to respond to that inward call.

If we consider carefully, we shall find among them four classes of women, willing to go forth for the Master, yet commanded to stay.

1. Those tied by untransferable home-duties.
2. Those forbidden to go, by parents, or others in authority.

3. Those who, in whatever way, are not strong enough. ✓

4. Those who are conscious of no vocation for this special form of work.

All these, from among even the small number of those whose wills are absolutely yielded to their LORD, so as to care little where or how they spend themselves for Him !

Many more there are, less absolutely given up to Him, hitherto, and yet willing and able, in the strength of the Body of CHRIST, to do something. Power is needed, of every possible kind ; physical, mental, moral, social, spiritual. And there are many in the Body of the Baptized, conscious of power in some way or other, and willing to put it forth, if under authority, and without much of that dreaded element, personal responsibility ; —many such there are, who would be useless, if alone.

And every educated woman in England, whether she realise it or not, is daily helping, or hindering, the work of Foreign Missions. For it is CHRIST's work ; one that cannot be ignored or neglected without sin ; and it is not of men only, but of women also, that our LORD has said : " He that gathereth not with Me, scattereth."

Women at home, then, have a manifold work for the Mission-field abroad. Let us ponder over it awhile, in detail.

I. *Women of this generation train the next generation.* The tone of thought and action as to Foreign Missions, fifty years hence, will depend, to an extent that can never be known on earth, upon the young mothers of the present day. In Sacred History, it is not without deep significance that the names of the *mothers* of Judah's kings are so often recorded.

Let us recall our own childhood ; our nursery tales and pictures ; the food and exercise provided for our imagination and affections ; and then our school-room days, at home or elsewhere. Could we not tell each other of a lack never to be supplied, or of memories that can never grow cold, as to interest kindled, or unkindled, in Mission-work,—by pictures and stories, and Children's Missionary Meetings or Guilds, and little plans for "helping the good Missionaries," such as GOD's little children, still "glistening with baptismal dew," delight in ? If we were early taught to pray for Foreign Missions, has the habit ever wholly died away ? If not, is that habit easy to acquire ?

The inference is obvious. The only question for

each to ask herself is : "What am I doing, to help or to hinder the Church of the future, in this, her world-wide Mission?"

II. Women can influence general society,—their equals, in age and position, as well as little children. The more refined and cultivated they are, the greater will be their power over others. Mere "conversation" is a power, for good or for evil, compared with which the much-talked-of power of modern inventions is but a plaything.

Now, what are the ordinary topics of conversation,—apart from the way of handling them? There are some, indeed, that are better un-named; others, in which it were well for women to remember Apostolic teaching, and avoid intruding into things that they know not. Others again there are, which are mischievous simply from their utter folly; involving that "*foolish* talking and jesting, which are not convenient;" quite distinct from the innocent, light-hearted talking, as "children of the free," which Our FATHER will never blame.

But, while we talk fluently on topics of "general interest," how often do any of us dare to allude to "Missions," as to a topic that ought to be of general interest?

The Arctic Expedition, the Ashantee War—these

have their champions in abundance ; among England's Volunteers for these ventures, who is not proud to reckon a personal friend ? But carry on the topic of "ventures for a noble cause," and speak of a friend or brother, fit for the highest posts in England, and yet, gone forth to be a "Missionary ;" and who is not made conscious, that if the contemptuous wonder be unexpressed, it is chiefly through mere courtesy ?

These things ought not so to be ; and Christian women are responsible, to a great extent, for not suffering it so to be. We need not "drag in" the subject of Missions ; but "a word spoken in due season, how good is it !"

To uplift the Mission-banner from the mire ; to silence—if only by her own eloquent silence—the first word of ridicule or of ignorant impatience, this is within Woman's province ; and the Master expects it of her. And then, by quietly-told *facts*, to turn this negative testimony to what is positive, and, GOD helping her, to win *enthusiasm* for the cause that in her watchful hearing has been put to shame,—is this too much for any Christian woman to do or dare for her LORD ? "In the Name of our GOD, we will set up our banners !"

III. With a view to this, women are bound to be

well-informed, as Christians and as Church-women, of the progress of Church Missions.

It would be counted "ignorance," not to have heard of the Fiji Islands, and their late annexation. Is it a more pardonable ignorance, not to have heard of—many a new colony of the KING of Kings,—many a fair territory annexed to His possessions? Are we to live through our appointed term in the world's long history, and do nothing to correct the notion, hardly ever attacked at all, till lately!—that an "interest in Missions" is the amiable peculiarity of *some* Christians, instead of being the common interest of all?

IV. *Women can use their pen*, for Mission-work. Not as "authors," necessarily; though some might well expend on such a cause the powers bestowed upon them for the good of the Church and the glory of GOD; but in ordinary correspondence. A real habit, once formed, of trying to widen and deepen Mission-work influence, in *any way whatever* that the Master may point out, would soon exert its power over a woman's ever-ready pen.

Many an idle note, about—nothing at all, would, by degrees, give place to some gentle reminder of a far-off corner of the earth. We do not mean a "begging letter," but a word as from sister to sister,

just naming—as one who cannot help naming—the far-off brother !

Might not something be done, moreover, yet more directly and definitely, by a little forethought and combined action? We have heard of an invalid who spends her long leisure hours in writing illuminated letters, exquisitely penned, full of holy and helpful thoughts, to soldiers in India. Other friends arrange as to the sending; hers is simply the willing and skilful hand; adding to the words of Christian sympathy some home flower, thoughtfully chosen according to the time of the year, and painted at the beginning of the letter, to bring back thoughts of “Home” and “Mother.”

Could not some of our lonely Missionaries be remembered thus practically, in some way suited to their need; and especially in parishes which GOD has honoured by taking from them one of His own volunteers for “Foreign Service?” Could not some combine to send forth a stream of regular information as to home-life and work; thus quickening sympathies, and giving scope for that great law of action and re-action between the heart and the extremities, which rules the spiritual as well as the natural body? “Love chiefly grows in giving.”

V. *Women can “work.”* No-one can deny that

this is a fitting occasion for the special ministry of Woman.

Many agencies of this kind are already in operation : Working Parties, Work Societies, &c., where materials are given out, to be sold, here or abroad, when made up, for the friends of the Mission.

Details would be needless. Here, as in all other things, judgment is needed ; that "right judgment" which our Church bids us pray for "in all things," and which the All-ruling SPIRIT of GOD will condescend to give us, even for the details of a Missionary Working Party. There will be difficulties ; there may be mistakes ; but the effort is none the less to be made, where GOD points it out as suitable.

Might not work for Foreign Missions, in some such practical form, become a motive for little girls, in the often unattractive task of "learning to work?"

VI. To some women, among those whose Mission-work lies at home, is given a special calling ; even that of *yielding up*—not themselves, but what is dearer than themselves—*son* or *daughter*, for Foreign Service in the KING's Army.

"Will you give me *Coley*?" That question, asked by Bishop Selwyn, of the mother of Patteson,—has it not become almost proverbial? We can-

not but suspect that the secret dread of such a question is keeping back many a Christian mother from opening her heart to CHRIST's Commandment as to Foreign Missions. "I feel that I have brought it on myself," a mother has been heard to say, when her son had gone forth; "I brought him up with such a high ideal of Missionary work!"

And are not many, perhaps, kept back from honest prayer that "the LORD of the Harvest" will send forth more labourers into His Harvest, by the secret reservation, "Only, LORD, not *my* son!—not *my* Pastor!"

VII. *Women can show hospitality.*—"A certain woman received Him into her house," has been written again and again, in the Record on High, concerning many a "Martha," and her receiving of CHRIST Himself, in those of whom He has said: "He that receiveth you, receiveth Me."

To have "lodged strangers"—for CHRIST's sake, not for mere kindness' sake—is a mark given by S. Paul of those eligible for a special office in the early Church. It is for the "Sarah" to provide for the strangers whom Abraham is not forgetful to entertain. Lydia, Europe's first convert to Christianity, welcomed to her house the first Missionary of the Church. Circumstances may have changed, in these

less simple days ; but should not the Missionary's heart be cheered, when at home for awhile, by the manifestation of the same spirit? And is it not for " the glory of the same LORD," Who accepts, in every age, each kindness done to His servants as done unto Himself?

VIII. *Women can pray*.—This is the greatest work of all ; the secret strength of all other work.

True, it belongs to men, as much as to women. Yet, in speaking of women's work, I would especially remind you that this is a work within your reach, at all times. The quiet intercession of many an invalid, the resolutely-dedicated time, taken out of a life of active service, for the great work of intercession for Missions, and *united definite prayer together* for special needs,—these weapons have a power in the whole Mission-army, which Eternity alone will fully reveal. " More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." There are those

" Whose prayers and silent efforts Heaven employs
To do the good, while others make the noise."

Many ways of working at home, for Missions abroad, have doubtless been omitted in the foregoing sketch ; *e.g.* distributing periodicals, collecting money, &c. ; as well as giving money themselves,

according to their ability. Some who *cannot* go to the Mission-field in person, but who would be *willing* so to do, may have the means of enabling another to go, by providing, or combining with others to provide, what is needful for the cost of passage, outfit, and after-maintenance. Love is ingenious in self-sacrifice; fertile in resources; "strong as death!" Why multiply suggestions? "Charity never faileth."

One more way of helping forward the work of Missions abroad must, however, be definitely named, being less obvious, perhaps, than others: *personal faithfulness in home duties*. The satirist must have no "Mrs. Jellaby" among our Mission-workers to hold up to ridicule,—a ridicule involving the holy cause which such a one caricatures. They must "guide the house;" they must "give none occasion to the enemy to speak reproachfully."

It must be made evident that their interest in Missions is based on principle, not on feeling; and that this principle rules nothing less than their whole lives. A holy self-restraint, the mark of the Cross, must stamp every common duty. The intelligence, as well as the affections, must be evidently enlisted. There must be no silly talk about "interesting natives," &c.;—no excited running

about to more Missionary Meetings than they can inwardly digest, while their own servants, and the obvious claims of those at hand, are uncared for.

Our women at home, if they would be "fellow-helpers to the truth," must be "keepers at home;" they must learn something of self-mastery and self-sacrifice; that so their witness may have power, and those who see that their charity extends to the ends of the earth may also see that it "begins at home."

After all, the work is one, throughout all the world. For there is but one LORD; and "He is the Great KING over all the earth." "It is GOD which ruleth in Jacob,"—here, in the Church at home,— "and unto the ends of the earth." Even there, must be the "Kings' Daughters, honourable women."

If even the annals of Heathendom are often made bright by the story of Woman's devotion, and if the Spartan mother could add fortitude to her love, shall it not be reserved for Christian women to show—

"A fairer strength than this,
Strength linked with weakness, steeped in tears and fears,
And tenderness of trembling womanhood,
But true as hers, to Duty's perfect Law?"

III.

WOMAN'S WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA.

WOMAN has undoubtedly received from the Virgin-Born a kingdom and a priesthood to administer; she has to take up the mantle of the holy women who ministered to our LORD in the days of His earthly mission; a special side of that Divine Incarnate Life has been committed to her, to manifest, and in gentleness and persuasive tenderness of ministering service to prolong, until He is again revealed. She must claim, in His Name, and make good His title to the realm of home and social order; and while she worships Him Who sitteth upon the Throne "high and lifted up," it is her part to see that His train shall fill the Temple.

As in the beginning of the Church's campaign, so now, even unto the end, she must in a true and real sense be a preacher of the everlasting Gospel

as a witness to all the nations. And we have to thank GOD that He has revealed to many a parent the glory of being represented by their best and dearest, in the work of fulfilling this final purpose of GOD.

Let me illustrate this, and supplement what has been said already, by some account of the system of help and actual work carried on by women, in that part of South Africa of which I have had personal knowledge.

From the beginning of this Mission, in 1863, women have been helpers from afar, as intercessors, correspondents, secretaries, embroiderers, providers and packers of Mission boxes. Very gradually, in the course of fifteen years, they have been drawn nearer and nearer, they have had more to do and more to suffer, more to pray for, to work for, to love and to live for ; until now, within the last five years, they have been taken in to the very centre of the work, and become an integral part of that outpost of the City of GOD, whose lot is cast 500 miles inland, among the boundless and thirsty plains of South Africa.

We have now on our Mission staff some thirty¹ engaged in Woman's work, who give their labour

¹ In 1878. Between 50 and 60, in 1883.

of love, without money and without price ; of inferior as well as of highest social grade ; in divers scenes, and in different occupations. Some have cast in their lot with us entirely, and have made our Diocese their home ; others only contemplate remaining two or three years, doing a good stroke of work, so to say, for GOD and His Church, where so much is needed. Some are with us as members of our Sisterhood, either in the first or second order ; others as Associate-workers, some unattached, and one formally set apart by the Bishop as Deaconess. Some are working at Bloemfontein, our Cathedral centre ; others at the Diamond Fields, and a few at a distant town of our Diocese, on the border of Natal. Some are engaged in educational work for European girls, others in hospitals and outdoor nursing, some few in the training of native and half-caste children, and one or two in visiting and general parochial work ; others are learning or superintending South African household economy, linen and laundry arrangements.

They have now altogether about 300 European and fifty coloured children under their teaching ; two small hospitals are worked by them, and they have been asked to take charge of a third, in consequence of the respect and confidence which they

have won for themselves and the Church ; and a vast amount of work, which can be done by women only, has not been touched as yet. Opportunities are now offered on every side, for the extension of their labours and their influence in hospital and educational and native Mission-work. At this present moment, there is work ready at hand for at least twenty more workers ; not to speak of what has yet to be prepared and developed.

The first idea was that some thoroughly experienced, middle-aged ladies should come out from England, and open schools in the various towns and villages of the Diocese. This plan can be much more easily carried out now, than was possible at first ; but the difficulty has always been to find properly qualified persons, able and willing to go in this fashion, two and two, or separately. We were therefore constrained to adopt another method for supplying our great need ; pressed upon us primarily, perhaps, by the fact that these children of our Church would otherwise have to go to Roman Catholic Convents, which were being everywhere set up in South Africa, or be without education altogether.

The idea of a Sisterhood,—of the advantage of

which I was only very gradually convinced,—was seriously entertained in 1872 ; when a lady began work, as well as she could, single-handed, residing at Bishop's Lodge. And then we were led, step by step, to the founding of a Community of women, upon those great principles of the common life which, on the whole, have stood the test of 1400 years' experience, and were first written on *African* soil, by the great African Bishop, S. Augustine.

It was felt that a Community was absolutely needed, to give stability and fixity to work undertaken so far away ; and while there would be, it was hoped, a large number of other earnest workers, not so distinctly pledged to "leave houses, and brethren, and sisters, and children, and friends, for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake," it was seen that a Sisterhood should be to the general body what the Staff College is to the Army—a training-school, a centre, and head-quarters, as well as a home.

We saw that it would tend to raise the general standard and tone of work, and provide, as the highest possible power for good, a "body-guard" and Court for the Great KING, set apart to acknowledge the Lordship of CHRIST by the offering of a pure worship, and pledged to set in motion on behalf of the Mission the forces of the spiritual

Kingdom, through constant intercession. Practically, too, it has been the experience of all, whatever their views about the very difficult question of "vows," that, on some errands of mercy, and under certain special circumstances, women cannot be employed who are supposed to be open to an offer of marriage. There must at least be an understanding on the subject, for a time. In spite of possible risks involved by calling in such help, it was believed that if the Bishop would lead, he could also probably control.

But how was such a Community to be established? The readiest way seemed to be to apply to some English Sisterhood: but even the largest English Sisterhood could not then spare a band of Sisters, to live seven thousand miles away from the mother-house; and—though the experiment has been made in other Dioceses, not unsuccessfully,—I, for my part, could never venture to undertake the responsibility of having only a branch and affiliated house, governed and guided practically by an extra-diocesan and even extra-provincial authority.

It was plain that our Sisterhood must stand upon its own foundation, with a constitution based upon the ancient principles of the same great Rule, but suited to the peculiar needs of the country; getting

its first existence from the Mother-Church, but living its own life, ruled by its own Diocesan, and organically one with the corporate life of the Church around.

To this end, an English Community did offer of its very best ; and, in its fulness of faith and largeness of charity, chose out one of its dearest, most experienced, and loving-hearted Sisters, and sent her out to do what she could. On S. Mark's Day, 1874, our first Sister arrived to begin her work ; accompanied by a small band of Associates, weak in themselves, but trusting that they might be made strong in CHRIST.

We have adopted the precaution of a very long probation, at first three years, and now two, for all who offer to join the Sisterhood, under the peculiar circumstances of our position, so far away, where none could be taken to the innermost heart of the work who had not well weighed the words : "Hearken, O daughter, and consider ; forget also thine own people,"—save in thy prayers, "and thy father's house,"—save in happy, loving thankfulness : "so shall the King have pleasure in thy beauty." We have, however, already grown into a Society : three confirmed Sisters, with nine others of the first and second order still under probation, and three

more seeking admission ; besides several Associates living with the Sisters, under an easy rule.¹

The *Constitution*, formally sanctioned and promulgated by the Bishop in Chapter, has been framed with a view to secure orthodoxy and continuity : ensuring loyalty to the doctrine and discipline of the Anglican Church, control by the Bishop,—acting constitutionally with his presbyters, and a healthy development of spiritual, intellectual, and bodily service.

A well-known Cóllect speaks of the “liberty of children, and the restrainedness of servants ;” and the key-note which has been chosen for the life and work of the Sisters of the Diocese is that verse from the Book of the Revelation : “His servants shall serve Him.” If there is another motto which is most frequently suggested for meditation, it is the two lines from Tennyson’s description of the salutary society around the hero-king :

“And all about a healthful people stept,
As in the presence of a gracious King.”

It is ever set before them, that the spirit of their law of life is to be found, first of all, in their devotion to the Person of Him to Whom they belong, as His own possession ; and then, in such works of charity

¹ Numbers considerably increased now, in 1883.

and mercy as He may permit them to do, for Him and His Church. Their chief joy is to be found in making up,—by their true, though feeble, love,—in some small measure, for the little love HE gets in the world, Who loves it so much !

The continuance of truth and love is secured by the personal and constant care of the Bishop himself, or his representative. No Rules or Constitution can dispense with personal influence ; though we have made the most careful provision possible, for the permanence of tone and principles in the institution. The Bishop in Chapter is to appoint the Warden, in case of a vacancy ; while the appointment must have the assent of the Sisters in Chapter. The Sisters, in their Chapter, elect the Superior ; but the election is not valid, until it is approved by the Warden, and confirmed by the Bishop in his Cathedral Chapter : that is to say, the Bishop, with his standing council of presbyters, appoints a grave priest to take charge, on his behalf, of the spiritual concerns of the society : the Sisters, with his permission, choosing one of their number to carry out the Rule.

The Founder having once given to the Society its Rule and Constitution, nothing can be added to it, altered in it, or omitted from it, without the

consent of the "Visitor," *i.e.* the Bishop. He is the ultimate and superior authority, in everything, and at all times. So the words of S. Augustine to the Sisters are made a reality: "You should obey your superiors,"—the Warden and the Mother, "but how much more the Prelate, who has the supreme rule over all!"

In this manner, too, the loyalty of the Community to the Church of the *Province*, in full communion with the Church of England, is secured; as well as the subjection of the Sisters to the properly constituted authorities of the Diocese, and their position as handmaids of the Church in the Diocese, with a Charter of their own, fully defined.

Certain obvious tendencies are also carefully guarded against, such as:—

1. *Undisciplined devotion*,—a fruitful source of error, in all ages,—by due authorisation of books.

2. *Arbitrary government by a woman*. It is made to be distinctly understood that the Warden stands in the relation of *the father of the family*; the "Superior" being only the executive of the Rule to which she is herself subject. I am very thankful to find the "military" system, which is the Jesuit ideal, protested against by an able writer on the subject in the *Monthly Packet*.

3. *Narrowness of sympathy and intellect* is amply corrected, by the indirect action of so many different interests and works, requiring various gifts and powers ; as also by direct instructions. The Bishop himself has a Bible-Class or Lecture, on Saturdays,—such as he has given before, in an English Theological College,—which seems to be quite understood and appreciated. We are not much in danger of forgetting, in this day, that women have minds and intellects ; which, however, are not worth much without cultivation of the *heart*.

I do not wish to give the impression that we have grown to our present happy and settled estate without many birth-throes, and travail pangs, and difficulties. Nor have all who joined at first, found that they could get on well in the life and work. This could not be expected. It is only surprising that, with so many, their hearts are wholly with us, even when they have been called back to England.

Hitherto, I have spoken chiefly of the Sisterhood ; but, as I have implied, a great part of the work is, and always has been, carried on by those who either have not a call, or are not yet conscious of it, to “leave all,” but who gladly devote some years, perhaps their whole lives, to the work. These come

to the "Home;" some from England, and some, now added to us, from our own neighbourhood.

If a lady asks me what good she can do, and how she can do it, I should reply: You can do good, first, by *living* there: by the mere fact of being out there, where units and individuals tell much more; and especially, as part of a Corporation and Society. Show what sort of a being, through the grace of GOD, a loyal English Churchwoman is, who is trying hard to serve her Master. *Live* there: this first; and next,—*Pray* there. Pray that our Jerusalem there may be "a praise in the earth." Let two or three agree to pray for the works of the Mission. And then, in the third place,—a most important place, but still the third,—*work* there, as you will be directed; in the way for which you are most fitted, by your health, your education, your strength, your gifts, natural and acquired. There is no lack of all sorts of work.

And if there is a fourth injunction, it would be this: *be prepared to give and take.* If you go out to live and work with others,—for which the acceptance of a simple rule of life will be needful, and great attention to the law of courtesy, however valuable your work,—remember, the Church of GOD is a *family*, and each house set apart for His work

is by no means a mere boarding-house, where, if you do the work, no more is expected of you ; or an hotel, where, if you pay your fees, you can claim residence in an ungracious way. Ladies must not leave their *manners* behind them, with their useless finery. However, there is other than the "common" life, available for any who will do good in a parish, as a Deaconess, or as an independent, though not self-willed, Church-worker.

We now come to the work itself.

1. The most important work of the Diocese, under the charge of ladies, is that of Education. The missionary power of this work cannot be over-estimated ; through none may you so surely have a hand in building up the walls of Zion and the fair palaces of the City of GOD. We have high-class, secondary, and elementary English schools. High testimony has been given to these, by visitors like Mr. Froude and Mr. Anthony Trollope.

2. Our Hospital work enables us to show the universality of our Master's Love, and the largeness of His purpose, both in respect of the whole nature of man, and all the conditions of men ; as well as the Church's thoughtfulness for her children. We have had letters of thanks from Her Majesty's

Government, and from Her Administrator, at Kimberley ; from Presbyterians, from the Dutch Church, from Roman Catholics, and from the principal Jewish congregation, at Kimberley.¹ Men will surely ask, "What mean ye by this service?" And they will have for answer, the sound thereof being heard without speech or language : "The Love of CHRIST constraineth ;"—"I believe in the resurrection of the *body*."

3. The importance of work for and amongst *native girls and women* cannot be pressed home too strongly upon those who would avoid the expensive disaster of Kafir wars and chronic native restlessness. The women are more wedded to heathen customs than the men ; in Zululand, they are keeping 20,000 young warriors waiting for wives, until they have "wetted their spears in blood !" Magistrates and Missionaries are all agreed, that peace and progress in the country must largely depend upon the readiness of England's daughters to take Africa's dark maidens by the hand, bravely, gently, and patiently, and so to lead them out of the shadow

¹ A most gracious letter of thanks was sent, by command of Her Majesty, for services rendered at the Military Hospitals in Zululand and in the Transvaal. The new Order of the "Red Cross" has since been awarded to several of our Sisters and Associates, for their good work in Zululand, the Transvaal, and Basutoland.

of death. This work has been well begun, through help from the Ladies' Association of the S.P.G. ; but not without our having had to buy our wisdom and experience. It is still comparatively untouched, in the Diocese.

As time will not allow of any detailed account of our experience in this sphere of labour, we can only state some conclusions drawn from that experience, as suggestions to any desiring fellowship in the work for native girls.

1. Learn the language as soon as possible ; though you cannot well do this, till you are actually with natives, in the country itself.

2. Be careful as to their feelings ; and be careful about courtesy.

3. Do nothing for yourself which they can do for you ; but supply the stimulus of your notice and approval. Their most common faults are sloth, sulkiness, and occasional fits of restlessness.

4. Do not give in, as you will be surely tempted to do, to the prevailing notion that natives are only useful tools, adapted for low and menial things, on whom mental and spiritual education would be thrown away.

5. Though it is necessary to cherish self-respect, in any natives with whom you have to do, this does

not mean that you are to treat them as equals. They are far from being so, at present ; and to treat them as such would be to act an untruth, and would have a very bad effect.

6. There must be no question about the most implicit obedience ; but avoid fussiness ; be quiet and firm. You have to be as a mother to them ; *in loco parentis*.

7. Be strictly just ; natives are excellent judges of this quality of *justice*, though they may not understand good nature.

8. They will trust you entirely ; but they will first need to be convinced of your disinterested motives. "When once they are so," as one who has had to do with them writes, "I have found their confidence to be boundless." They seem to feel the need of some one higher and stronger than themselves, to love them and help them, and they are not really wanting in affection and gratitude.

Still, lest we should dwell too much on the bright lights of the picture, let us have an illustration, from one who has known them, of the darker shadows.

"Choose a winter morning, dark and very cold. You call the girls at six o'clock, as usual ; but they are snugly rolled up in their blankets on their pieces of carpet, and would prefer staying there

until the sun is well up,—at ten o'clock, perhaps. Meantime, they are speculating upon the reason why English people think it necessary always to do the same things, whether it is hot or cold! You wait as long as you think good for your patience or for them, when, perhaps, you try a sudden clap of thunder,—the more startling, from an apparently serene sky,—and at a stamp of your foot and a strongly emphasized '*Coga bonako-nako!*'—*i.e.* 'Get up instantly!'—the blue blankets rise from the ground with more or less expedition, but with an extremely displeased air. Sullen looks are cast at you from all sides, as the toilet proceeds, from your ill-used victims.

"When this is finished, and prayers are over, it is too much to expect them to sweep and arrange the house, as usual, on such a cold morning! It is far pleasanter to huddle round the kitchen fire, and wrap up their heads in their shawls. You disperse them again and again; and by breakfast time you may congratulate yourself, as you say grace for the still ill-used victims, if your efforts have resulted in making them do part of their work in double the time of the whole.

"When the lesson hour comes, though the sun is shining brightly, they sit scowling round the table,

till you feel that the temperature is really depressing, in more senses than one. However, if you hold on, things will improve in the afternoon, and you will be rewarded for having kept the even tenor of your way, by the increasing respect and prompt obedience of the girls.

“In dealing with them, patience is the first, second, and third thing required. If you understand and love young children, you are likely to get on with these girls of seventeen or eighteen ; taking Coleridge’s counsel with you for the work :—

‘O’er wayward childhood, wouldst thou hold firm rule,
And sun thee in the light of happy faces,
Love, hope, and patience, these must be thy graces.’”

Perhaps in South Africa, where these three must go together, and where patience is so much needed as the enduring expression of Divine Charity, the greatest of these, I should venture to add, is *Patience*.

IV.

SISTERHOOD LIFE.

IN order to take a right view of our subject, we need, first of all, to realise that the Life of GOD takes many forms in the soul of man. "GOD fulfils Himself in many ways," according to the needs of the Church and of the world, and according to the capacities of those whom He has chosen. We must try to appreciate the manifold wealth and magnificence of the Life of the HOLY SPIRIT, as developed and manifested in the Church Catholic, which is the Body of CHRIST.

No single Saint or Society or Institution, in this age, or in any other, comes to the end, so to speak, of the Divine resources. There is no need to go back to any past age, as if any one special type of holiness, to be seen there, must be followed exclusively. No doubt we shall see the same life-giving *principle* at work in the production of the saintly life, all along the centuries. But there is infinite

variety in the *expression* of this life. "All these worketh that one and the selfsame SPIRIT, dividing to every man severally as He will."¹

The HOLY SPIRIT has a variety of ways by which He pours into the Church, the Body of CHRIST, spiritual wealth and power, thus imparting to her members the Life of her ascended LORD and King. One principle may be manifested in one part of the world, and another shown forth elsewhere; each separate Diocese and Province of His Church may have something to contribute to the great harmony of praise and thanksgiving that ascends to the Throne of GOD.

So also with divers ministries of service. No one need take the exact view that I myself take. But it is only by each individual—as well as each Parish or Diocese in the whole Church—contributing something to the general fund of experience, that the entire Body is enabled to grow up into "the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST." It is thus that, although working on somewhat different lines, we shall all be really working together, in one Society, for the great Head of the Church.

Now, in my own special Diocese, we are working

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 6, 11.

out, pre-eminently, the problem of the *corporate life* of the Church, the "Collegiate" idea ; the expression of the manifold life of the Church, in its *social* aspect. This principle of associated work, as you will see, is in fact the root and foundation of Sisterhood and Community Life.

Our characteristic idea, our special aim is this :— to do whatever we have to do for GOD, *in common*, in the power of "the Body," instead of separately. There is no extraordinary or isolated heroic effort ; no individual standing out as anything very remarkable ; our work is all done in the power of *associated* life ; the Bishop with his Clergy, his Cathedral Chapter, his Synod of Clergy and Laity.

All our institutions are worked on this principle. It is the whole "Body" which puts itself forth ; as, for instance, in *educational* work. The Sisterhood is bound up with the Bishop, through the Cathedral Chapter. It has a special "Charter" of its own. And it is in this its *constitutional relation to the Diocese*, that our Sisterhood differs, so far as I know, from all others in the Church.

The Body Corporate has to follow "the Pattern shown in the Mount," of associated life and action. We believe that our LORD specially blesses such community action ; that He specially helps us to

correct our imperfections and defects, when we try to work in that way. "Where two or three are gathered together" in His Name, He is specially present ; and when "two or three" agree to pray definitely for anything, He has specially engaged to give an answer.

This, then, I may venture to say, is the characteristic and leading idea of our Diocese of Bloemfontein. Other Dioceses—in India, in Central Africa, and elsewhere—have other special ideas to express, or energies to manifest. Our point is that of *corporate life*.

In proposing this to ourselves, we have set a very high standard before our Sisterhood ; and I do not desire to speak as though we had yet been able to realise that standard. We fall short, in many ways. I constantly tell our Sisters and other workers that *they must never lower their ideal ; and yet, must be patient with their present measure of attainment*. They must be patient, though they fall short of their intention. It will be realised more fully, in time ; and meanwhile they must "follow after," and hope some day to apprehend that for which they are apprehended in CHRIST JESUS.

You must remember, then, that it does not follow,

because I have sketched out an ideal, that we as yet embody it ; though we are trying to work it out in a real way, which, as we hope, our LORD will accept. We are working according to our day, and according to our strength ; but the result is not, absolutely and positively, what it may be in time. This must be clearly understood.

Let us come now to the *principles* of Sisterhood Life, and of Woman's Work, generally.

When I first went to Bloemfontein, I did not start with the idea of a Sisterhood. I had no preconceived plan of working with "Sisters," when I was called to the Diocese. I had had a little experience on the subject in England, and I was not at all sure that a Sisterhood would be the thing needed, in South Africa. It was only after I was established there, that I saw there was nothing else to be done, but to make a Sisterhood the centre of our Woman's Work.

We were led to see its necessity, on two grounds.

1. Respect for the Christian Home, both English and Native.
2. In self-defence, and to guard against Romanism.

The further blessing was realised *subsequently*,

of the power and virtue of the wholly dedicated and consecrated life, as a force in the Church itself, and as a way of preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom to those that were without.

1. For the sake of *Christian Homes*.

(a.) I saw that nothing could be done in the country, without reaching the *Homes* of our people, especially those of the European and English speaking Christians, and making them more after the pattern of a godly, pure, sober Christian Home. Unless the fountains of life are purified, it is impossible to do very much for the country, however earnest, powerful, and energetic the staff of Clergy may be. This is obvious.

(b.) As with the English Homes, so also with those of the *Native* races in South Africa. We shall never have done with wars and tumults, or make any great progress, unless the type of womanhood be improved and elevated. "The men will be what the women make them," or conceive that they ought to be. The women set the standard of heroism. Our native women think that a man cannot be great, unless he is "a warrior," not only in name, but as one who has seen fighting and "drawn blood." Therefore, the men do all in their power

to engage in war. It is much easier to make our native *men* Christians, than to make the *women* Christians.

The foundations, then, of our Sisterhood Institution are, first of all, a respect for the Christian *Home*. Sisterhood life is not antagonistic to this idea of the sacredness of Home and married life, though it is often supposed to be so. It is, in fact, for the sake of this idea, that we ask Sisters to help us to establish Christian Homes. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, incline thine ear : forget also thine own people, and thy father's house." "Instead of thy fathers thou shalt have children."¹ Our object is to reverence and to ennoble the idea of "Home,"—the idea of married life. We ask Sisters to help us in doing this, by training the future wives and mothers of the Colony; by inculcating ideas of true affection and purity and self-restraint.

2. We have to guard our people against the influence of *Romanism*.

In our Colonies, this influence is likely to be very powerful. As "Religious Houses," in France, *e.g.*, become broken up, there is likely to be a great diffusion of Roman Communities throughout the

¹ Ps. xlv. 10, 16.

Colonies. When we look forward to the future of the Church there, this is rather a grave and anxious consideration. Roman Catholics seem able to send any number of people, to subscribe any amount of money ; to raise large, grand-looking buildings as Convents, offering a certain kind of externally brilliant Continental education, which is attractive to our Colonists, whose own education, in some cases, may not have been very deep.

Therefore, we have to provide education, in order to prevent the daughters of our Church from going off to Romanist establishments, such as those at Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown,—which are very strongly planted,—and coming back to their homes, even if not perverted to Romanism, yet without any knowledge of their own Faith, or filial attachment to their own Mother-Church.

On Sundays, for instance, in these Roman Communities, they would no doubt be “excused from the religious Services of the Institution.” But what does that mean? It means, probably, that they would be made to sit at a deal table, with their open Bibles before them, while in the distance they would hear sweet music, and the singing of hymns and responses, and be conscious of the fragrance of incense. All this would have an influence

on their young minds, and would be likely to make their own religion seem very dull to them. The hold of their own Church over our children's minds would be gradually sapped ; and a sort of vague notion would spring up, that, if there *is* a beautiful religion, exhibiting self-devotion, and a high, up-lifting worship, it will be found in the Roman Church alone.

It is often supposed that Sisterhood Life is more or less "Roman." But it is really, as I have said, to guard against Romanising, as well as for the sake of the Christian Home, that we have sought the aid of Sisters.

Two things must be remembered, as to Woman's Work in the dedicated life. There must be

I. Reverence for Nature.

II. Trustful loyalty to the Revelation of GOD.

Without holding fast these two principles, Community work will be sure to be found defective, somewhere.

I. We must *respect Nature* ; not annihilate it, not destroy it, but incorporate and transfigure all that is truly natural. Our Blessed LORD came "not to destroy, but to fulfil"¹ the law of Nature, the law

¹ S. Matt. v. 17.

of Creation. This is constantly brought out in the New Testament. "I am come that they might have Life, and that they might have it more abundantly."¹ He is come to bring more abundant "Life" to every part of His dominion.

Now, among the primal Laws of Woman's Nature, we see, in the charter of her creation, that she is called

1. To be a help-meet for Man.
2. To replenish the earth: to fill it full of the riches and wealth of Life.

(1) *She is to be a Help-meet for Man.*

All Sisterhood work, to be perfect, ought, if possible, to be carried on with its real central power vested in the Bishop: or in the Warden, representing him and working with him. In the Christian organisation, the Bishop represents the Great Head of the Church; he is the earthly Head—although he is the constitutional and not the autocratic Head—of the Divine Society, in that particular Diocese. Therefore, the work must be under his personal control and rule; not under the irresponsible rule of any woman.

In insisting upon this as a principle, I feel

¹ S. John x. 10.

strongly that we are resting upon a revealed Law of Creation. All our Sisters and other workers are "help-meets" to their Bishop, who represents the special office of Man, as "the image and glory of GOD,"¹ in the care and conduct of the Church on earth, under the supreme rule of CHRIST our LORD, as Head. A Bishop is said, in old metaphorical language, to be "married" to his Diocese. He must not be a mere ornamental "figure-head" of a Community; a mere "Visitor," in a general, abstract sort of way. He must have real power; though of course, his rule over the Community must be constitutional, not arbitrary; the Clergy acting with him.

(2) There is another side of Woman's calling, corresponding to that in the *natural* order, of *replenishing the earth*. "Instead of thy fathers thou shalt have children, whom thou mayest make princes in all lands."² This natural vocation has its counterpart in the spiritual sphere,—in the order of the Church of GOD,—through the spiritual offspring brought forth by means of her influence. Not indeed originating, but receiving an idea, she intangibly and almost insensibly communicates it to others and extends the force of it, through this far-

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 7.

² Ps. xlv. 17.

reaching *influence* of hers, which is the true power of Woman. So, as it was said of old, "The desolate hath many more children than she which hath a husband." ¹

We feel that, however feebly realised as yet, GOD gives us great ideas,—visions of Truth : but we trust very much to our Sisters and their Associates to *develop* them ; to work them out, and live them out ; to diffuse them through the length and breadth of the land, with intelligent co-operation.

Woman's nature is *receptive* and *communicative*. She first receives, and then communicates, through her power of influence : not by going about fussily to "do good" to this or that person,—not by preaching and talking, but by *living* in the Church, quietly and simply, after apprehending intellectually the true idea of her own place and work in the Church, whether in the "dedicated" life, or in any other.

There is a great *power of intellectual apprehension* in the mind of woman ; a great power of *receiving* an idea, to be spoken out, or lived out, afterwards.

Even if it be true that she does not, as a rule, originate great ideas, yet she is able to receive them and ponder them in her heart ; and then, by her

¹ Gal. iv. 27.

great gift of sympathetic feeling and silent influence,—through what is *felt*, rather than by what is spoken,—she can communicate the force and power of those ideas to many more than the voice of the Teacher and Pastor could personally reach. Thoughts and principles may thus be assimilated, by members of a Community and their Associates ; and then, without any mere verbal repetition, germinate and bear fruit in many hearts and lives, outside. Thus the “alabaster box” is, as it were, broken at the feet of the LORD, and the house is filled with the odour of the ointment.

II. There must be *truth and humility towards the Revelation of GOD.* Now, what does Revelation teach us, about Woman’s Nature ?

There are two great thoughts,—two mysteries or revealed facts,—of which Woman is made a symbol or representative, in the Bible ; and we are not to suppose that anything is stated in Holy Scripture, without a purpose.

1. Woman is taken as the embodiment, the type and symbol, of the Divine attribute of “ *Wisdom*,”—the expression of GOD’s Will.

2. She is the type and symbol of the *Church* of GOD.

1. *Wisdom*. In that wonderful eighth chapter of Proverbs, this attribute of GOD is personified. "Wisdom" is portrayed and exhibited under the figure and symbol of a *woman*, who "crieth in the place of concourse." She has a message to utter; expostulating with the world on account of its folly; seeing the true aim and purpose of human life, and desiring that all should follow it. The influence of Woman is the true corrective of Man's fault, selfishness. Yet, if she do not rise to the height of her great calling, none more faulty than she in this matter. "*Corruptio optimi, pessima est.*" Her special temptation and fault is a liability to foolishness; to a want of sound judgment, to credulity,—to religious credulity not the least;—which renders her too easily the dupe of falsehood and imposture, which hurries her into premature and ill-considered action, and which may have, and often does have, disastrous consequences. It is not needful that she should be, as the term is, "strong-minded," but she must have common sense: which indeed is one of the best qualifications of a woman for any work in the Church, whether in this country, or in any other.

Man, who is the "glory of GOD," if we may judge by the Divine ideal, is to express and show forth

Love ; brotherly love, fatherly love : Love, the great spring and cause of action, in the spiritual order ; without which no plan is devised, no course of action determined on ; in one word, the *originating* faculty, which chalks out the great lines of action, broad and bold and unhesitating. That is Man's especial function.

But he does not stand alone. Here, as everywhere in the world, Woman is Man's "help-meet." For the "Wisdom" of which Woman is the representative, what is it but the *organising* faculty, the *executive* power ; the ability to oversee works and workers, to proportion the task to the hand that is to do it ; a power conspicuous in the mistress of a well-ordered household, such as we see in the picture of the "virtuous woman," given to us in the last chapter of the Book of Proverbs. Personified as a woman, "Wisdom" is said to be "with the Most High : by her Kings reign, and Princes decree justice." She "finds out knowledge of witty inventions." Even her natural "mother-wit" may be enlisted in the service of the Kingdom of GOD. But she must be ever, and above all, wise with the true Wisdom that comes from the overshadowing of the HOLY SPIRIT, Who proceeds from CHRIST, "the Wisdom of GOD."

Woman, then, is to exhibit the attribute of "Wisdom;"—good sense and tact, in practical details; working ably on the lines laid down for her, as the true handmaid of the Church; not *reasoning* out an idea, but working it out, by her own "womanly intuition."

And what is Sisterhood life, but the embodying of the soul's highest intuitions? In no other way can the Sister's life be explained. She has seen the Vision of Celestial Beauty. In Him, she finds her All in All, her life-long Love: her exceeding great reward,—the smile that HE gives, when "she hath done what she could."

Sir Bartle Frere, at our "Conversazione," referred to the Sisters as bringing a sanctified presence, even to the Diamond Fields! As a rule, nobody goes to or stays at such a scene, unless with the hope of finding diamonds, and so becoming rich. "Why then," people will naturally ask themselves, "should the Sisters be there?" And the reply to such a question is this:—that they have placed themselves at the disposal of their Divine Master, and see an end, a purpose of *His*, which they can realise by going there. Such a reply can hardly fail to give, to even the most debased and careless, a new conception of the

purpose of life, and a higher ideal of the spirit in which its work ought to be done.

2. Woman is the symbol of the *Church* of GOD. In the Book of Revelation, the form and likeness of *Woman* is again seen, as representative of the "great mystery" of the Kingdom.¹ The Church of GOD is called the "Bride" of CHRIST; the idea representing weakness and dependence, joined with strength of devotion and self-surrender.

This heavenly reality, the "Sister" is especially called to represent; though, in speaking of this aspect of the life, we must be careful as to our phraseology.

In the Sisterhood life, there is an *accentuating* of that calling which in truth *belongs to the whole Church*, to be the "*Bride*" of CHRIST.

The Sisters are not so "*Brides*" of Christ as to exclude the rest of the Church, for *the whole Church* is the "Bride;" but their part is, especially, to put forward this side of the deep Christian verity. As one part of the Church represents the priesthood of the whole Church, another the royalty, another the teaching, and another the home-life, the family, —which is a shadow upon earth of the TRINITY

¹ Rev. xix. 7; xxi. 9; xxii. 17. Eph. v. 32.

above,—so the Sisterhood life represents, and brings out into sharper relief, in behalf of—with—for—and in the name of—the whole Church, that calling of the whole Church of CHRIST to be “His holy Bride ;” to be absolutely His, at His disposal ; to feel the deepest attachment and yield the most entire devotion to Him ; to live *for Him*, and for Him *only*.

One great want in the Church of to-day, is the *recognition of vocations* ; depending on the wealth of GOD the HOLY SPIRIT, Who is “dividing to every man severally as He will :” the recognition of “holy estates ;” such as the “holy estate” of matrimony, and also the “holy estate” of those who are entirely and specially dedicated to our LORD, as “Sisters.”

Our Blessed LORD, as He passes by, calls some with one tone of His Voice, and some with another ; one soul has to follow Him in one way, the next in quite a different way ;—as when He was on earth. We are, each of us, to answer to the call given *to us*, readily and simply ; without any jealousy, or comparison of it with that given to others ; heartily recognising and following our own vocation.

This vocation is pointed out, in the case of all

whose desire is to serve GOD, first by certain providential leadings, and then by an inner tendency,—at first, it may be, of feeling, rather than of will and purpose,—towards a special line of service.

We are not to say that one vocation is “higher” than another; there is no need whatever of comparisons; but we are to recognise and heartily realise, alike, *e.g.* the *vocation* for the “dedicated” life, and the *vocation* for marriage.

There is the life of the mistress of a Christian household, in her own house; and there is that of the “handmaid of the LORD,” in His Church; one who simply belongs to her LORD, for this special work; attached to Him in this special way, as one of His “Body-guard.” She is to represent the Church of CHRIST, in the relation of the Church to her LORD as “Bride,” professedly and professionally. All the members of His Church belong equally to their LORD. Yet, as some are called professionally to the Priesthood, so also it should be accepted as natural, that some shall, specially and representatively, belong to our LORD in this particular way; having only one thing to do, like Anna in the Temple, to wait upon their LORD.

There is quite enough said in Holy Scripture

to make us see that there is a place, in the corporate Christian life, for this special vocation.

These chosen ones form His Court, round His Sacred Person. They bring all that they touch, practically, into connection with Him Who is the Centre of the spiritual order. They are to win the provinces of Home-life, of Art, of Music, and such like, for Him Who is "worthy." They do what others do, whether it be teaching, music, nursing, or anything else, as belonging to Him ; as His alone, and only His ; in His Name, and for His Sake ; simply because HE has need of it, for the general good of His Church, and in order to bear witness to His universal Lordship over all.

We, in South Africa, know practically that, in such a country as ours, we *must* have the help of women who have this high calling ; we must have some, of whom it is understood that they are not open to an engagement of marriage. Ordinarily, every one round about us is either married or going to be married ; the country itself cannot provide us with disengaged people, having leisure at their disposal for this necessary work of the Church.

But, apart from this practical necessity, there is a special power in their being known to be

the property, the possession of the LORD; the "lot" of the LORD, which consecrates the whole people. There is no reflection cast upon the rest of the Body, as if they might not be quite as "religious" as Sisters. But the "lot" of the LORD are His special possession and property, set apart for His service; the settled order and plan of their lives being arranged, definitely, with a view to His work and His worship; which is indeed the business of all, but for which so many say that they have "no time."

During our Synod at Bloemfontein, several representatives of our busy and occupied laity, including some from the Diamond Fields, were present at the Synod Service held in the Sisterhood Chapel. I remember how they seemed to feel the blessedness of realising that, while they themselves had so little time for prayer, this continual worship was being offered on their behalf. Such people, while doing their best to make room for prayer in their own busy lives,—for none can be dispensed from it themselves,—are likely to find comfort in the thought that they are *represented* by the "Sisters;" that the LORD is holding His Court, and His Word is being fulfilled, that "in every place incense shall be

offered unto Him, and a pure offering," all day long; that the perpetual worship of which the Psalmist speaks is a reality.

Thus, through this portion of her members, living in community, the Church may offer to Him this devotion; she may keep up a regular round of worship and homage; wherein, though there may not always be a conscious warmth and glow of devotion—a special *enjoyment* of religious Services,—she is foreshadowing on earth, and preparing for, the life of Heaven itself, where, while "they rest from their labours," they "rest not day nor night" in their song of praise.

But, besides this direct worship of their LORD, the Sisters are continually occupied in *Prayer and Intercession*, for the whole Church, and for the special needs of individuals. And this is one of the most powerful agencies by which the Church, according to the will of her LORD, leavens the world, and influences the destinies of mankind. Simply to stand round the LORD, and be in His Presence, is in itself a source of power.

And then, there is the actual material *Work* itself; work to be done for HIM, with hand or heart or mind.

This work is waiting on every side, for those who will do it. It does not so much matter what the work is; this will vary from time to time, according to the gifts of the individual, and the needs of the Church. The Sisters are, in His Strength, to win *every province of social life* to Him, by the exercise of all the various gifts and powers which have been entrusted to them.

At Bloemfontein, for instance, our Sisterhood, in one department, is occupied in giving to the daughters of the Colonists an education of the highest class. As much attention is given to this as possible. We aim at affording to the pupils the opportunity of attaining a high standard of excellence, for example, in music, with a view to its bearing on Church work.

It may be difficult to some, to see what this has to do with "Mission-work." But our idea, in High Class education, is this: to reach the minds of those who will have the most important homes, as centres of influence, in the future. And surely it is obvious that, if the women who represent the Church are to make the Church's influence felt to the fullest extent, they must be able to give all that this age requires. We want people to feel that they need not go anywhere but to the feet

of CHRIST, in order to gain all that they really need. Art, Science, Literature, Culture of every sort,—every branch of human attainment—must be sanctified, by being practised in and to HIM.

“O LORD our LORD, and spoiler of our foes,
There is no light but Thine ; with Thee all beauty glows.”

Now, if this is to be fully done, we must have, for the doing of it, lives wholly dedicated to the work. And if this Community life is to be really useful to the Church, it must be formally and frankly accepted by the Church. There must be something more than the woman merely dedicating herself, in her own will and heart. The Church must formally recognise her purpose, and provide a *test* for her. The personal dedication may be as real and true, before GOD, in secret ; but some formal expression is needed of this dedication.

This brings us to the very delicate—and, in some ways, extremely difficult—question of “Vows.” As I have said, a woman may be truly “dedicated,” throughout her whole life, without a formal vow. But what is really meant, when we speak of “vows,” is the formal expression,—the offering up to GOD, in some special way, of this inner purpose of her life ;

and its acceptance, in the Name of CHRIST, by the Church. It is not necessary that the postulant should take a solemn oath never to marry. But in the Service used at a Sister's "Profession," some such question as this must be asked, and some such engagement made,—after a probation, say, of about two and a half years :—"Are you prepared to remain unmarried, in order that you may be among those who attend on the Lord without distraction?"

It seems to me that, in some form or other, we must put a question, the answer to which will satisfy the congregation of the faithful, as to the freedom, the deliberation, and the clear and unmistakeable nature, of the resolve. My own experience, certainly—and I venture to think, the experience of the Church—makes it evident that there are some women who will never find rest in anything short of this. They want it, for their own protection ; as their own expression of a deliberate purpose ; and as expressing and satisfying a need in Woman's nature.

For this deliberate resolve, they need both a sacramental embodiment,—the outward expression, as well as the inward reality,—and also the formal acceptance and sanction of the Church ; and there-

fore, in the name of the Church, this question is asked.

Some well-considered safe-guard—as, for example, a careful probation—is a necessity, before such a grave and important promise should be made to the Bishop: and it should be clearly understood that power remains in him to release from it, if urgent necessity should so require. There should be a recognition, as things are at present, of the Bishop's *dispensing* power.

Even if such an engagement be not of the very essence of the “dedicated” life, and a way of presenting it to the LORD, it will be found that the nature of at least *some* women will demand such a formal sanction. There is the danger that if it were not provided for them in our Church, they would be tempted to go elsewhere, and—doing evil that good may come—endeavour to obtain it by an indefensible and most blameable act of schism. I am persuaded that, if sought by them, it ought to be granted; after due probation, and under proper protection, rule, and authority.

Then comes the further question: How is this “dedicated” life—granting that there is to be such a life, for some—to be manifested? In *individual* life, *i.e.* as a Deaconess? Or in *associated* life, *i.e.* by belonging to a Community?

Now, there is great power in associated life. It manifests order ; it provides continuity. For instance, look at the life of "Sister Dora." It was a grand and beautiful life ; yet, here was its weakness,—it did not *multiply itself*. There was no continuity in it. It ceased with the individual existence, and its results were not gathered up by any who came after her. This is the weakness of every form of work which is not bound up in a society and fellowship.

There is a need also of associated life, *for the repression of self-will*. It is easy enough to get any number of people to begin a new work of their own. The difficulty lies in really surrendering their own individual wills, for the general good of the work. In family life, this is corrected ; people are not able to do just as they please ; they are controlled. And so, with regard to those who are called to work for GOD outside of the family, it is better, for the perfecting of character, and for the protection of the work, that such persons should be associated. There is a good deal of giving and taking, in this associated life ; there are the various angularities of workers coming from different places, which call for mutual consideration and concession ; and this tends to make them pliable, and to prevent

any from seeking this life, merely for *spiritual consolation* and *spiritual luxuries*.

We must remember, however, that though the Sisterhood life is for obedience, it is not for bondage. It is for Life, not for Death !

It is not to be a narrow, one-sided life. Far from becoming "one-sided," the Sisters, being thrown now with one set of workers, and now with another,—occupied, now in this form of work, and now in that,—ought, on the contrary, to become many-sided ; filled out, completed and developed, in their intellectual and spiritual being. They have not a narrow and petty life, but a large and full one.

Again : since the idea is not that of the "regiment," but of the Community, as a *family*, the annihilation of the affections is not a necessary duty. The Sisters do not cease to love mother, and sisters, and home. We do not bring in "the power of an *expulsive* affection," to crush all other affections ; but, making GOD the first great Love, all else falls naturally into its place. They do not care for their home people less ; perhaps they love them all the more. They are not to become hard and callous, mere machines, soldiers in a regiment, with no will or individuality of their own. It

would be the greatest possible mistake to suppose that Sisterhood life is a life of bondage,—mere machinery!

Still, there must be obedience; a real obedience; not to the caprice and arbitrary will of an individual, but to the constitutional administrator of the Rule. At the same time, there must be readiness to obey an order, even though its reason may be unexplained; not for the purpose of glorifying "obedience," but because a good reason is to be taken on trust, though it may not be clear to the person to whom the order is given. There must be a reality about this matter of obedience, or the Institution would soon become insubordinate and unworkable; and it is of great importance that a spirit of *trustfulness* should be promoted, as in the rule of a family; the direct opposite to a suspicious and carping spirit of criticism.

But herein, for safe-guard and power, *the Diocesan principle is essential*. The Sisterhood must be one with the Bishop, who has constitutional—not arbitrary—control; and by this means those scandals of the early Sisterhoods will be avoided, which really arose from "Papal exemptions" from local and Diocesan control and discipline. The Sisterhoods were not part of the Church in the midst of

which they grew up; they did not feel the air of the Church around them, controlling and ventilating their life. The Popes dispensed them from the authority of the Bishop of the Diocese, and of the ecclesiastical powers immediately over them; and this was the secret of the degradation into which they fell.

In order, however, that this Episcopal authority should be constitutional and not arbitrary, the Bishop, with his Cathedral Chapter, should give the Sisterhood a *Charter*.

Under such a system, each of the Sisters, after "Profession," herself becomes part of the governing body,—the "Chapter." The early Communities really represented, in the face of the great Roman autocratical authority, the principle of *constitutional government*. They were ruled each by its own Chapter; their affairs being administered by the whole body, assembled in conclave. No rule could be added or changed, no work undertaken, without the consent of the "Chapter." All had a real share in the government; they were not mere machines, moved by others, but intelligent workers with a volition of their own. Obedience may be very real and true, while at the same time the Sisters may have a share in the government

of their own Society ; which will help to develop their minds, and to maintain in them a sense of responsibility.

In like manner, community of *property* may secure liberty for the service of the Church and of humanity, so as to be “without carefulness,” though not without responsibility.

All this life must go on, as was said at the beginning, in the power of *the Body* of CHRIST ; in relation to *the Church*.

This Sisterhood life, then, is our *centre*. Around it, or with it, are our Deaconesses and Associates. In our Diocese of Bloemfontein, there is this high—I will not say, necessarily the highest—form of life, standing out in distinction to the life of the married ; and between these two lives, there are all kinds of ministries.

As in a family there is unity of life, and yet each may have her own special interest and pursuit, so also must it be in the Home of the Church of GOD. There is room for Deaconesses ; and room also for “Associates,”—those who work only for a time ; who desire to do some work for GOD before the end of their lives, but cannot give themselves up to it entirely. For all these different forms

of service, there is perfect liberty ;—a liberty which may result, in some cases, in marriage. We claim and maintain, for those who desire it, a true loyal liberty.

The life and business of the “Deaconess” is perhaps more *parochial*. The Deaconesses are assistants of the Clergyman of the Parish. They are not related one to the other as “Sisters” are, unless they practically become Sisters in form and order, associated in Sisterhood *life*, without the *name*. They are more independent, and fulfil their ministry in the Church rather more through parochial agencies. With any change in the Parish, their work may cease. The Sisters have a Charter of their own, which continues ; their primary end is the *life*, not the *work*.

And now, with regard to the *inner life* of the Sisterhood. Herein, of course, as in the life of the whole Church, the Holy Eucharist is the centre. The Sisters must continually present themselves before the LORD. “Behold the handmaid of the LORD!” “My soul doth magnify the LORD.” In the Eucharist, the Sister must bring all her life and her duties up to Him from Whom all goes forth, and for Whom all works are done. This is the highest power that she can exercise ; the source of

all her strength. This is the centre of the ordered life of devotion, from which flow out activities and energies for the life of service.

Then, there are her Rules, her recurring hours of Office and of Silence ; and there is the practice of Meditation, which is a science to be learnt carefully and practised regularly : yet all this must be done in the liberty of the Spirit.

The great difficulty among us at present is to find sufficient *time*, in the midst of pressing work, for Meditation and quiet. Our great desire is to have a reserve supply of workers, so as to enable the needful work to be done, and yet leave the life quiet and calm ; and I trust, please GOD, we may attain to this.

Meanwhile, by Intercession, their ministrations and sympathies expand and reach to every part of the Church ; realising the law of the Kingdom : "Not by might, nor by power, but by My SPIRIT, saith the LORD of Hosts."

I quote, *e.g.* from their Office at Terce,—“the third hour,” 9 a.m.,—with its Antiphon : “From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, My Name shall be great among the Gentiles,” &c. ; and with its Prayer, “that an abundant supply of labourers may be sent,” into the different parts of

the earth. "Let them not run unless they are sent, nor, when sent, falter in their course," &c.

The Office at mid-day has an intercession for the children under education, with this Antiphon : "Take this child, and nurse it for Me, and I will give thee thy wages ;" and this Prayer : "Bless, O LORD, we beseech Thee, the children of various ages and degrees whom Thou hast given us to train for Thee. Inspire us, in our work of education, with wisdom, and patience, and love : and upon the children committed to us bestow, we pray Thee, a reverent spirit, an obedient mind, and a loving heart ; that, following Thy holy Example, Who'didst vouchsafe to be, for us, a little Child, they may grow daily in favour with GOD and man," &c. These are instances of the carrying out of the principle, that everything should be brought to our LORD, before the Sisters go out, in energy and power, to spend their influence in that department of work which is committed to their trust. Other Offices would show the same thing.

This work has been more than theoretically tried. It may have been done very imperfectly ;—and no one knows its weaknesses better than I do ;—yet these are the *principles* that we have really set

before us, and, moreover, have *practically carried out*, in a "day of small things." And, on the whole, *we have found them answer*. We have tested them, really and practically, in all kinds of work. We have Hospitals, and large Schools for various classes and races, in various places ; and thus our work realises the condition of bringing forth the "things new and old" of the Kingdom of Heaven. No life brings a person into contact with more varied forms of human existence than that of a Sister, in a Colony, and in the Mission-field ; and by this diversity of experience, the Sisters learn wide sympathies.

Our principles have been tested, not only by the work, and by the life, but also in *death* ; as in the case of one of our Sisters, who came to us quite untrained.

Her whole life as a "Sister" was spent with us ; and now He has satisfied the desire of her heart, to meet her LORD. In her last illness, her thoughts were only of being with her LORD, His for ever. There was great liberty of spirit about her. She went away from all her spiritual privileges at Bloemfontein, to the Diamond Fields ; and learnt there, in the wilderness, what it is to lean on the Arm of "the Beloved." She was quite ready to go ;

and yet she loved the Home—its order and fellowship and worship—intensely, as a true daughter. She longed to be with her Sisters there, while yet she had that spirit of liberty which could realise that it might be good for her to be thrown entirely upon JESUS CHRIST Himself.

She is now one of our "living stones" in Paradise. It is a beautiful saying, that "no Community can be really founded, until one of its members has gone to be a living stone in Paradise." Our principles have therefore not only been tested in life, but have gone through the test of death. It is said, that one must never speak quite confidently of a person, till his death; but these principles helped to carry her through "the valley of the shadow of death," and have been found to bear the test with others also, who have been brought very near to that valley, or have passed beyond it, to the other side.

It is very clear that forces have been put in motion, in these days, which are working upon people's minds with tremendous power. We are creating a great deal of *steam* in our world; a reserve of force, which will need some healthy outlet. If this be not provided, the result will be a "Nemesis" which

will shake and startle society. Hence it becomes a necessary duty, for the protection of society, to recognise the manifold vocations in Woman's life and work.

We hear a good deal of "Woman's Rights." We must not forget her grandest, tenderest right, which is, as we have said, to *represent* the Church of the Living GOD; whether it be as the head of the household, the *wife*, or as the handmaid of the LORD, the *Sister*;—to make known the Wisdom of GOD, as Man is to represent the Majesty of GOD, His tender Love and Helpfulness. It is under the figure of "Virgins" that our LORD represents the wise and foolish souls,—Wisdom and Folly;—the foolish Virgins being those who miss, through careless ease, the true end of life;—the wise, those who see it and grasp it; who listen to and obey the Voice of their LORD, as He calls them to follow Him, in *whatever* way, by *whatever* path.

There is a great opening now, in South Africa, for this special sphere of Woman's work. GOD has been passing over that land, as you know, with His strong wind, rending the mountains. There has been the earthquake; the upheaving of forces, social, political, and national. The fire, almost of

despair, has entered our hearts ; burning, drying, withering them up. Yet, though from Him they came, the LORD has not been in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire ; but He will surely be in the "still small voice" of the HOLY SPIRIT's ministry and work. In that "still small voice," we may yet look for His Power to be manifested among us, His glory revealed. Then, the nations of the land may veil their faces, and come and worship GOD, and confess that "GOD is in us of a truth."

And even if it go not to the hearts of the people, yet in our own hearts it will develop that longing expression of the Church's desire, the voice of the SPIRIT and of the Bride : "Come, LORD JESUS !" So shall we be ready, when a Voice that all must hear shall cry aloud : "BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH ; GO YE OUT TO MEET HIM !"

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